



## **RMC Quarterly Executive Board Meeting and Legislative Luncheon Meeting Minutes**

**Date: January 27, 2023**

**Time: 12:00 pm – 2:00pm**

**Location: Calvert House, 58 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

**Participants:** The Honorable Kevin Atticks, John Hartline, Josh Hastings, Dean Fisher, Yolanda Hipski, Elizabeth Chung, Scott Warner, Alice Settle-Raskin, Roseanna Vogt, The Honorable Michael Jackson, Kurt Fuchs, Steve Connolly, Steve McHenry, Susan O’Neill, Matthew Tefteau, Sara Seitz, The Honorable Jake Day, Lindsay Thompson, Chris Benzing, The Honorable Mike McKay, Sarah Kilmon, Julie Woepke, Kimberly Kratovil, Lisa Challenger, Josh Bokee, Kathy Bosin, Nancy LaJoice, The Honorable Chris Tomlinson, Mark Fisher, Rick Hemphill, Richard Blair, Brenda Brown, Debbie Bowden, Carmella Watkins, The Honorable Ken Kerr, The Honorable Mark Chang, Holly Porter, Dan Schneckenberger, Mel Litter, Deena Kilmon, Chris Abell, Wendy Stringfellow, Lucille Walker, Bill Valentine, Shelby Watson-Hampton, Alyssa Hastings, Ron Hantz, Grayson Middleton, Don Mulrine, Melissa Kelly, Zack Tyndall, Nann Mann, Mike Arntz, Cristy Morrell, Ann Jones, The Honorable Michelle Guyton, Katie Wright, Edward Knox, Karen Malkin, Cindy Stone, Jacinta Bottoms-Spencer, Brandon Rosario, Owen Bailey, Linda Foley, Charlotte Davis, Megan D’Arcy, Amanda Clevenger, Carol D’Agostino.

Participants were asked to get their lunch and find their seats before the program began. Once participants were seated, Chair Susan O’Neill welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 12:38pm. Chair O’Neill welcomed Wendy Stringfellow with Forever Maryland, sponsor for the luncheon, to the podium to share remarks.

Agriculture Committee Co-chair Lindsay Thompson and Forever Maryland’s Program and Policy Director Mr. Josh Hastings introduced the guest speakers - MDA Secretary Designate Kevin Atticks and DNR Secretary Designate Josh Kurtz. Acting Secretaries addressed the audience.

Legislative Committee Co-chair Lindsay Thompson reported that the Legislative Committee convened on Monday, January 9, 2023 for their first meeting and there are approximately 30 members. Ms. Thompson stated that the Committee will meet every other Monday during session unless additional meetings are necessary and invited participants to join the Committee. Ms. Thompson introduced the 2023 Legislative Priorities and asked for a motion to approve the priorities. **Mr. John Hartline made the motion to approve the 2023 Legislative Priorities, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded the motion. The 2023 Legislative Priorities were unanimously approved.** Ms. Thompson shared the upcoming RMC Legislative events with the participants, which include a virtual Rural Maryland Day on Thursday, February 9, 2023 and an in-person Maryland Day event on Friday, March 24, 2023.

Chair Susan O’Neill asked the participants to review the December 1, 2022, Annual Meeting minutes and asked for a motion to approve the December 1, 2022 meeting minutes. **Mr. Steve McHenry made the motion to accept the meeting minutes, Mr. Chris Benzing seconded the motion. The December 1, 2022, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the financial report and stated that most of the grant funds have been sent out but there are currently five outstanding grant agreements totaling a little over \$200,000. Ms. Davis stated that there has been a setback this year with grant funds awarded due to new requirements set by the Comptrollers office, such as requiring W-9 forms. Ms. Davis reported that RMC staff are working with Grantees and MDA’s fiscal office to resolve these issues. **Mr. Chris Benzing made the motion to approve the financial report, Ms. Lindsay Thompson seconded the motion. The financial report was unanimously accepted.**

RMPIF Committee Chair Scott Warner stated that the number one priority for the Council is funding for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) and the Council is asking for level funding at \$9 million. Mr.

Warner further reported that the Governor included \$9 million in the FY2024 Budget. Mr. Warner asked participants to thank Governor Moore and Legislators for the funding. Mr. Warner informed participants that RMC has put in a bill this session that will provide technical updates to the RMPIF statute.

Ms. Charlotte Davis provided the report for the Joint Planning and Development Committee. Ms. Davis provided a background on the rural issues survey and stated that the Joint Planning and Development Committee has been in discussion with the University of Maryland Institute for Governmental Service and Research (IGSR) to develop a robust rural issues survey. IGSR submitted a draft proposal for the RMC Survey Project at a cost of \$49,994. Ms. Davis reviewed the project objectives, scope of work and timeline with the Executive Board. Ms. Davis stated that the Council will need a motion to approve the proposal and another motion to approve a declaration to sole source the project as the Council did not complete the RFP process due to the special nature of the request. **Mr. Chris Benzing made a motion to approve a declaration to sole source the project, Mr. John Hartline seconded the motion. The motion to approve a declaration to sole source the project was unanimously approved. Mr. Chris Benzing made a motion to approve the IGSR Rural Maryland Council Survey Project for \$49,994. Mr. Scott Warner seconded the motion. The motion to approve the IGSR RMC Survey Project for \$49,994 was unanimously approved.**

Ms. Charlotte Davis reported on the Rural Maryland Foundation (RMF). Ms. Davis stated that RMF is the Council's affiliated nonprofit and introduced members in the audience. Ms. Davis stated that the Foundation has been working on developing a rural Think Tank to focus on the research about issues impacting the State's rural communities. Ms. Davis stated the Foundation is asking \$50,000 from the Council to begin the process to issue an RFP to focus on the Think Tank. Ms. Davis stated the total cost would be \$100,000 but the Foundation is requesting \$50,000 now to get the project off the ground. Ms. Davis asked for a motion to support the Think Tank project. **Mr. Chris Benzing made a motion to support the Think Tank project at \$50,000, Mr. Scott Warner seconded the motion. The motion to support the Think Tank project at \$50,000 was unanimously approved.**

Health Committee Chair Sara Seitz provided the Health Committee report and stated that the next meeting for the Health Committee is February 22, 2023 to create a revitalized mission and vision for the Committee under the Rural Maryland Council. Ms. Seitz reported on the successful series of Health Transportation Roundtables that were hosted in the fall with the final report ready for review. Ms. Seitz further reported that there is a procurement currently from the State Office of Rural Health on a 2023 Rural Health Plan and the Health Committee Members will be providing input to the Plan.

Ms. Charlotte provided the Executive Director's report. Ms. Davis asked participants to join a RMC Committee with sign ups available at the Luncheon. Ms. Davis thanked the RMC staff and stated that the Council is looking to fill the Program Administrator position. Ms. Davis stated that RMC recently completed the FY2022 Annual Report and it will be submitted to the Department of Legislative Services. Ms. Davis reported that Maces Lane was approved for funding at \$45,000, which will go towards programing for the Community Center. Ms. Davis stated that RMC is working towards getting a placeholder in the State's budget for broadband funds since there doesn't appear to be any at the moment.

Senator Michael Jackson accepted the Rural Champion award for his outstanding leadership and public service in promoting legislation and policy solutions to benefit rural communities. *Note that the Rural Impact Awards ceremony took place at the December 1, 2022, Annual Meeting but Senator Jackson was unable to attend which is the reason he was presented his award at January 27, 2023 meeting.*

Ms. Charlotte Davis reviewed upcoming events with participants that included an Electric Vehicle Symposium to be held on February 13, 2023 at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center and a Broadband Symposium planned for May 10, 2023 at the Calvert House. Participants shared upcoming events that include Forestry Day, January 31, 2023; Taste of Maryland Ag Dinner, February 2, 2023; Taste of Eastern Shore, February 9, 2023; Farm Bureau Day, February 8, 2023; Chicken Day, February 28, 2023; and, Taste of Southern Maryland, March 2, 2023.

Chair Susan O'Neill thanked everyone for coming to the luncheon. The meeting adjourned at 1:38pm.